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THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS,
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A FULL PROGRAM IN SPITE OF HANDICAPS

Reports from 43,000 farmers to this Bureau, last month, indicated intentions to increase the acreage of corn 3%, oats 7%, barley 9%, hay 4%, Flax 54%, sweet potatoes 16%, peanuts 19%; to decrease spring wheat 14%, potatoes 2%, grain sorghums 6%; and to keep the same acreage as last year of tobacco and rice. Many factors influence the situation before actual planting, but this gives some indication of producers' turn of mind this spring.

If these intentions should be carried out, it would mean just about the same gross acreage of crops as last year. That is the big, general meaning of these reports. Bad times or good times, agriculture must meet the responsibilities of property - including taxes, debts, and maintenance.

The effort at readjustment becomes more apparent in two major money-crop regions, the Northwest being prompted by poor wheat prices, the Southeast by poor cotton yields. One region is turning to flax, oats, barley and livestock; the other to sweet potatoes, peanuts, tobacco, poultry, etc. Such shifts reflect greatly disturbed conditions.

Producers of the great feed crops again apparently contemplate some increase therein. Men with memories four years long, however, recall what a job it has been to work off a surplus of grain. Of course the multitudinous pigs of 1923 were just as hungry for grain as though they did not themselves represent a two years' hang-over of corn cheap enough to burn. So the man with a one-year memory now remembers only high priced corn.

It is true that a farmer must grow something, and feedstuff can sometimes be carried along when cash crops are an immediate loss. If one expects to produce surplus feed crops to sell his neighbors, he should keep an eye on the size of the neighbors' herds. Indications are that there will be fewer hogs to feed next winter.

It is apparent that production this year will still be attended by the difficulties arising from high wages, loss of farm workers and the general disparity between prices of farm and urban products. The situation justifies a very considerate attitude on the part of men who hold farmer obligations. It should make conservatives of those who are still proposing new county court houses, jails, bridges and certain other projects that mean higher local taxes.

KEY REGIONS AT A GLANCE

THE EAST - Frost is out of the ground and some field work under way. Heavy freezes last month did some damage to clover meadows, winter wheat, peaches, etc. Season still rather backward. Market movement of stored crops has progressed rapidly with good roads. Dairy situation strong on volume of consumption but in a thoroughly unsettled state on the production end.

THE SOUTH - Season backward, storms and raw weather. Eastern fruit and truck hurt by frost. Cotton planting making slow progress around the Gulf. Reports indicate more fertilizer and calcium arsenate will be used than last year. Some eastern districts discouraged over cotton. Talking very heavy acreage of sweet potatoes. Texas apparently intends to increase cotton acreage materially.

CORN BELT - Bad roads, bad weather, backward season. Winter wheat thought damaged somewhat by freezes. Some spring sowing done. Some corn land under preparation. Talking about same or slightly increased acreage of corn, compared with last year. Much poor seed showing up in tests. Heavy run of hogs continues. General opinion is that there will be markedly fewer hogs on farms a year hence.

WHEAT BELT - Winter grain starting up slowly. Came through winter in fair condition in West, some damage by freezes in eastern part of Belt. Hessian fly and chinch bugs have appeared in some areas. Spring wheat territory reducing acreage somewhat in favor of flax, corn, barley, etc. General feeling through the wheat country remains one of depression.

RANGE COUNTRY - In general, stock has come through the winter in good shape and conditions now favor good calf and lamb crops. In southwestern Utah and Nevada drouth has pinched things considerably, and storms have hurt stock in Colorado; otherwise feed is fairly ample and in the South new grass is at hand. The sheep industry is very optimistic. The cattle situation remains difficult; some cattle men are inclined to see brighter things ahead, but the industry as a whole is weighted down by the four years' background of trouble and financial distress.

PACIFIC COAST - In a conservative frame of mind due to low prices of wheat, cattle and fruit, and to the serious drouth in the South. Spring program has gone forward on usual basis in the North. General growing conditions about normal except for shortage of snow in mountains and probable water scarcity in certain areas.

INTENDED PLANTINGS THIS SPRING COMPARED TO ACREAGE HARVESTED IN 1923

The following table summarizes reports from 43,000 farmers stating their intentions regarding the planting of crops this spring. This is in no sense a forecast of actual plantings, since many things always influence plans before planting time. It is simply an indication of what farmers had in mind at the time of making the report. The percentage in each case relates to acreage harvested last year, which is considered as 100:

Crop	United	North	South	E. North	W. North	South	Western
	States	Atlantic	Atlantic	Central	Central	Central	
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Spring wheat	86	111	---	85	84	---	92
Corn	103	102	101	102	106	101	113
Oats	107	104	86	106	108	120	107
Barley	109	112	186	109	105	122	119
Potatoes-Irish	98	104	109	95	90	112	93
Potatoes-Sweet	116	100	117	121	110	116	89
Flaxseed	154	---	---	---	150	---	239
Grain Sorghum	94	---	---	---	90	95	102
Tobacco	100	106	104	98	100	95	---
Peanuts	119	---	115	---	---	123	---
Rice	100	---	100	---	---	97	120
Tame Hay	104	99	105	105	106	108	103

The indicated reduction of most significance is that of 14 per cent in spring wheat.

The most significant indicated increases are in corn, flax, sweet potatoes, and peanuts.

Total acreage, on the basis of these intention reports, will not differ materially from last year.

AVERAGE PRICES, AT THE FARM, OF REPRESENTATIVE PRODUCTS
Month Ending February 1, 1924.

Actual prices received at the farm by producers. Average of reports covering the United States, weighted according to relative importance of county and State. Figures compiled by Division of Crop and Livestock Estimates of this Bureau. Quotations in dollars or cents.

Shows 1913, year ago, and latest available months.

	<u>Feb.</u> <u>1913</u>	<u>Feb.</u> <u>1923</u>	<u>Jan.</u> <u>1924</u>	<u>Feb.</u> <u>1924</u>
Cotton, per lb.	¢ 11.8	26.8	32.5	31.4
Corn, per bu.	¢ 51.4	72.5	73.6	76.5
Wheat, per bu.	¢ 80.2	104.4	96.7	98.0
Hay, per ton	\$ 10.74	12.04	13.59	13.60
Potatoes, per bu.	¢ 52.6	64.2	86.4	88.1
Oats, per bu.	¢ 32.8	42.4	43.4	45.4
Apples, per bu.	¢ 78.4	142.3	121.3	125.0
Beef cattle, per 100 lbs.	\$ 5.55	5.55	5.38	5.47
Hogs, per 100 lbs.	\$ 7.17	7.65	6.59	6.54
Eggs, per dozen	¢ 21.1	29.9	35.4	33.6
Butter, per lb.	¢ 27.6	42.0	44.9	44.4
Wool, per lb.	¢ 18.7	35.3	36.6	37.5
Veal calves, per 100 lbs.	\$ 7.23	8.37	8.36	8.51
Lambs, per 100 lbs.	\$ 6.34	10.83	10.19	10.53

The month's trend was slightly upward in case of the crops, except cotton; likewise in case of the animal products except butter and eggs. Hog prices usually advance somewhat in February; this year they barely managed to hold their own through that month.

Products higher than the general price level still included cotton, wool, eggs and butter. Products below the general price level included potatoes, corn, wheat, hay, beef cattle, hogs. This situation was identical with the previous month, except that eggs have dropped behind wool in order of relative price.

PRICE INDEXES FOR MONTH ENDING MARCH 1, 1924.

1913 = 100

Farm products figures from this Bureau; commodity groups from Bureau of Labor Statistics. Shows year ago, and latest available months:

Farm Products

(Prices at the farm)

	<u>Feb.</u> <u>1923</u>	<u>Jan.</u> <u>1924</u>	<u>Feb.</u> <u>1924</u>	<u>Month</u> <u>Trend</u>
Cotton	216	262	253	Lower
Corn	122	124	129	Higher
Wheat	133	123	125	Higher
Hay	109	124	124	Same
Potatoes	100	134	137	Higher
Beef cattle	94	91	93	Higher
Hogs	102	87	87	Same
Eggs	155	183	174	Lower
Butter	155	166	164	Higher
Wool	211	219	225	Higher

Commodity Groups

(Wholesale Prices)

	<u>Feb.</u> <u>1923</u>	<u>Jan.</u> <u>1924</u>	<u>Feb.</u> <u>1924</u>	<u>Month</u> <u>Trend</u>
Farm products	142	144	143	Lower
Food, etc.	141	143	143	Same
Cloths & clothing	199	200	196	Lower
Fuel & lighting	212	169	180	Higher
Metal & met. products	139	142	143	Higher
Bldg. materials	192	181	182	Higher
Chemicals, etc.	132	132	131	Lower
House-furnishing goods	184	176	176	Same
<u>ALL COMMODITIES</u>	157	151	152	<u>HIGHER</u>

RELATIVE PURCHASING POWER

(At February 1924 Farm Prices)

1913 = 100

<u>In terms of:</u>	<u>Of a Unit of:</u>				
	<u>Cotton</u>	<u>Corn</u>	<u>Wheat</u>	<u>Hay</u>	<u>Potatoes</u>
All commodities	166	85	82	82	90
Cloths, etc.	129	66	64	63	70
Fuel, etc.	140	72	70	69	76
Metals, etc.	177	90	87	87	96
Bldg. materials	139	71	69	68	75
House-furnishing goods	144	73	71	70	78

	<u>Beef cattle</u>	<u>Swine</u>	<u>Eggs</u>	<u>Butter</u>	<u>Wool</u>
All commodities	61	57	114	108	148
Cloths, etc.	47	44	89	84	115
Fuel, etc.	52	48	97	91	125
Metals, etc.	65	61	122	115	157
Bldg. materials	51	48	96	90	124
House-furnishing goods	53	49	99	93	128

In the crop group, the month showed a slight increase in indicated purchasing power of corn and a slight decrease in cotton. Other things were essentially unchanged.

Among the livestock products, the only change of account was a further decline in eggs (a seasonal trend).

Farm products as a whole made no change in indicated position, the purchasing power index standing at 74, the same as January.

SUMMARY OF PRICE INDEX NUMBERS

1913 = 100

In the following, farm price indexes are compiled by this Bureau; wholesale prices are the Department of Labor indexes. Purchasing power represents relationship between prices, at the farm, of farm products and wholesale prices of non-agricultural products, unit quantities being considered in each case.

Year and month	Farm Price Crops 15th of month	Farm Price Livestock 15th of month	Farm Price Crops and Livestock Combined	Wholesale price All Commodities	Wholesale price of Non-Agrl. Commodities*	Purchasing Power of Farm Products#
1913	100	100	100	100	100	100
1914	108	103	106	98	94	112
1915	110	95	102	101	97	106
1916	124	111	118	127	132	89
1917	208	164	186	177	176	106
1918	224	192	208	194	186	112
1919	234	198	216	206	195	111
1920	238	168	203	226	234	86
1921	109	107	108	147	161	67
1922	113	111	112	149	163	69
1923	136	103	120	154	167	72
1920 Feb.	252	177	215	232	234	91
1921 "	120	117	119	160	178	67
1922 "	105	108	107	141	149	71
<u>1923</u>						
January	126	106	116	156	170	68
February	130	107	118	157	172	69
March	134	106	120	159	175	69
April	139	107	123	159	176	70
May	140	105	123	156	172	71
June	139	100	120	153	168	71
July	136	102	119	151	165	72
August	136	102	119	150	163	73
September	138	109	123	154	164	75
October	139	103	121	153	161	75
November	137	97	117	152	160	73
December	137	94	116	151	158	73
<u>1924</u>						
January	140	97	119	151	160	74
February	141	98	120	152	162	74

* "All commodities", excluding farm products and food.

Expressed in terms of non-agricultural commodities.

THE TREND OF MOVEMENT TO MARKET

Figures show wheat, corn, hogs, cattle, sheep receipts at primary markets; butter receipts at five markets, compiled by this Bureau. All figures given to nearest thousand, that is, three ciphers omitted:

Month	WHEAT Receipts Th. bu.	CORN Receipts Th. bu.	HOGS Receipts Thousands	CATTLE Receipts Thousands	SHEEP Receipts Thousands	BUTTER Receipts Th. lbs.
1921 Total	435,606	340,908	41,040	19,764	24,168	472,011
1922 "	413,106	378,598	44,067	23,218	22,364	530,601
1923 "	386,430	271,858	55,330	23,211	22,025	549,207
1923 Jan.	38,002	37,526	5,306	1,876	1,636	40,613
" Feb.	21,533	31,901	4,492	1,427	1,366	33,839
" Mar.	22,081	24,710	4,928	1,502	1,430	41,575
" Apr.	21,785	16,836	4,318	1,670	1,447	40,825
" May	17,457	10,809	4,524	1,900	1,794	54,617
" June	18,217	14,610	4,204	1,629	1,426	76,403
" July	36,435	18,515	4,181	1,903	1,661	64,086
" Aug.	63,012	20,845	3,714	2,214	1,800	47,831
" Sept	44,196	18,355	3,607	2,295	2,659	41,907
" Oct.	38,380	16,541	4,816	2,802	3,465	38,558
" Nov.	36,576	23,280	5,416	2,182	1,816	33,774
" Dec.	28,756	37,930	5,825	1,810	1,526	35,179
1924 Jan.	15,548	30,594	6,253	1,888	1,697	37,689
" Feb.	20,165	44,689	5,335	1,457	1,412	40,474

The movement of grain to market considerably increased in February, helped presumably by slightly better prices and roads.

The run of hogs declined in February, as is usual, but continued at a remarkable rate, nevertheless.

Cattle and sheep are running like last year.

Butter movement heavier.

THE TREND OF EXPORT MOVEMENT

Compiled from Commerce reports by Division of Statistical Research of this Bureau.

Month	WHEAT including flour	TOBACCO (Leaf)	BACON HAMS AND SHOULDERS	LARD	TOTAL* MEATS	COTTON# running bales
	1,000 Bushels	1,000 Pounds	1,000 Pounds	1,000 Pounds	1,000 Pounds	1,000 Bales
1922 February	10,992	22,052	66,003	75,520	62,647	326
1922 12 months	232,302	430,908	631,452	766,950	734,118	6,114
1923 January	12,519	41,309	74,432	107,786	86,938	474
" February	12,197	24,380	64,488	89,056	75,023	360
" March	10,725	31,688	66,441	109,187	75,933	318
" April	10,195	40,141	68,528	85,475	77,963	260
" May	14,396	28,421	64,608	93,199	72,605	160
" June	12,881	49,730	59,473	64,605	68,799	215
" July	12,822	44,105	64,264	69,479	74,127	172
" August	19,929	33,480	69,194	83,758	80,112	244
" September	22,465	37,646	76,911	83,630	88,833	689
" October	18,652	44,949	72,341	76,378	83,183	774
" November	12,147	49,381	71,947	74,251	85,069	767
" December	12,991	49,270	76,263	98,578	89,890	846
1923 12 months	171,919	474,500	828,890	1,035,382	958,475	5,279
1924 January	12,143	47,579	79,067	132,758	90,430	547
" February	10,019	39,183	81,108	99,910	90,462	482

Although February lard exports dropped off from previous month, the movement of pork and other meats continue in heavy volume - all much above same month last year.

Wheat exports lighter.

Cotton exports in February below previous month but considerably heavier than same month last year.

* Includes fresh, canned and pickled beef, bacons, hams and shoulders, fresh, canned, and pickled pork, mutton and lamb.

Includes linters.

THE COLD STORAGE SITUATION

March 1 holdings (Shows nearest million, six figures omitted:)

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>5 Year Average</u>	<u>Year Ago</u>	<u>Month Ago</u>	<u>March 1, 1924</u>
Creamery butter, lbs.	21	9	15	10
American cheese, lbs.	19	21	40	35
Case eggs, cases	2*	1*	50*	4*
Total poultry, lbs.	94	114	99	94
Total beef, lbs.	175	101	103	98
Total pork, lbs.	814	784	801	878
Lard, lbs.	95	59	54	69
Lamb & Mutton, lbs.	16	6	2.3	2
Total meats, lbs.	1,098	958	988	1,061
Apples, bbls.	3	4	7.8	6

Storage holdings of dairy products and eggs decreased further during February. This is the natural seasonal movement. Pork went into storage in some quantity, whereas other meats moved outward.

Compared with the average situation this date, stocks are low in case of butter, beef, lard and mutton; high in case of pork, apples and eggs. Dressed poultry shows average stocks.

The low storage holdings strengthen the position of butter and lamb producers, while the opposite is true of American cheese, eggs and pork.

* Note: Egg figures represent hundred thousands, five figures being omitted.

GENERAL BUSINESS INDICATORS
RELATED TO AGRICULTURE

	1923 Feb.	1924 Jan.	1924 Feb.	Month's Trend
PRODUCTION				
Pig iron daily (Thou. tons)	107	97	106	Increase
Bituminous coal (Millions tons)	42	51	46	Decrease
Automobiles shipped (Thou. carloads)	36	46	49	Increase
CONSUMPTION				
Cotton by mills (Thou. bales)	567	576	508	Decrease
Unfilled orders Steel Corp. (Thou. T.)	7,284	4,798	4,913	Increase
Building contracts (Millions dollars)	230	261	259	Decrease
Hogs slaughtered (Thousands)	2,820	4,016	3,227	Decrease
Cattle "	871	1,155	915	Decrease
Sheep "	708	920	725	Decrease
MOVEMENTS				
Bank clearing (N.Y.) (Billions dollars)	17	21	18	Decrease
Mail order sales (Millions dollars)	26	31	30	Decrease
Men employed, N. Y. State Factories (Thou.)	554	535	540	Increase
Interest rate, Coml. Paper (60-90D)	4.63	4.88	4.78	Decline
Av. price 25 indus. stocks (Dollars)	115	112	112	Unchanged
Retail Food Price Index (Dept. Labor)	142	149	147	Lower
Wholesale Price Index (Dept. Labor)	157	151	152	Higher

Pig iron production increasing and steel industry very active. Volume of construction work, railway equipment work and automobile production still at high level.

Employment slightly increasing, price level stable, security markets fairly firm, interest rates easy.

The general industrial situation is essentially unchanged in its relation to agriculture. Workers are still leaving the farms for high city wages. Portions of the textile industry are less active than a few months ago, raising possible points of uncertainty in the cotton and wool situation.

THE SITUATION IN VARIOUS KEY STATES

(From Reports of State Statisticians of this Bureau)

NEW YORK

The general situation is not greatly different from what it was a year ago. Most farmers made very moderate incomes in 1923 and taxes and expenses have been heavy. Farmers, however, have been more careful in their purchases and in living expenses, and in most sections have paid off part of their debts. There is much discouragement and many farmers would like to quit but there are few who are buying farms and there are not as many city jobs open as there were a year ago.

FARM POPULATION. The decline in farm population during 1923 was estimated by Professor Warren on the basis of reports which we secured for him, at 3 per cent. Part of the decrease was due to a further reduction in the number of hired men, part to a decrease in the number of young men and women staying at home on the farms and part to a reduction in the number of farms. In certain sections the abandonment is an item of large importance. It is particularly noticeable in some unproductive sections back a little way from thriving industrial cities. In the immediate neighborhood of large cities farm houses are fully occupied. In some cases the occupants are working in the cities and the farms are not tilled but in general the relatively high price of vegetables has caused a demand for good trucking land near the cities. The abandonment of farms does not cause a corresponding decrease in the total acres of crops, because even in the remote and unproductive sections most of the hay is cut by neighbors.

According to Professor Warren's estimates the number of people living on the farms of this State was as follows:

January, 1917.....	898,000
January, 1918.....	858,000
January, 1919.....	824,000
January, 1920 (U.S. Census).....	800,747
January, 1921.....	785,000
January, 1922.....	794,000
January, 1923.....	762,000
January, 1924.....	741,000

FARM LABOR. So many farmers are earning less than the wages of a competent hired man that there is little demand for farm labor this spring. Some farmers complain that it is impossible to find men who want to work on farms but in general the slight "easing up" in industrial employment in the cities has made it less difficult to secure farm labor.

CROP ACREAGE. With allowance for causes of bias, the reports which I have received regarding the expected acreage of crops show a rather small change from last year. Wheat and rye will be reduced on account of the low price of grain and the small demand for rye straw. This decrease will be about offset by an increase in the acreage of spring grain. A slight increase in the acreage devoted to corn is almost universally reported as the acreage planted last year was lower than usual. A 2 per cent increase in buckweat is reported as expected, but it is not likely to materialize. Beans have been profitable the last few years and will probably be showing a further increase. The 10 per cent increase reported would not be surprising. A slight decrease in hay is reported but adverse weather or labor conditions during the spring months are likely to cause more land to be left in hay than is now intended. Much, also, depends on labor and price conditions during the summer for there is a considerable acreage of hay land in this State which is left uncut in unfavorable seasons. This is particularly true in the abandoned farm sections. My reporters list a 2 per cent increase in acreage of potatoes. Potatoes paid rather better than most farm crops in 1923 and a somewhat larger acreage is to be expected - and would seem desirable. A moderate increase in cabbage, canning crops and other vegetables is also a probability, though the reports are too scattering to be reliable.

In general the changes indicated by the expected acreage reports tabulated here seem to me to be just about what the present situation demands.

FRUIT. Some fruit growers made money last year but recently the price of apples have been so low that those who stored apples have lost money. There seems to be a large quantity of apples still in storage and holders are finding them very hard to move. During February the price of dried apples increased and a number of western New York evaporators started their fires and bought for 60 to 70 cents per 100 pounds apples which had been in storage since October.

In western New York the fruit growers feel quite discouraged, but the fruit business is one with many ups and downs and there is no indication of any material decrease in production next year. Occasional growers may be too hard pressed financially to give their orchards proper care but sales of spraying equipment seem to be as good as usual. The crop of 1923 was in most cases moderate and most trees have a good set of fruit buds. The outlook is therefore for an average crop of fruits, except raspberries which have been seriously affected by diseases.

DAIRYING. The situation is exceedingly complicated and on the whole discouraging to producers. The Dairymen's League, which represents about 60,000 dairymen in this State, pools the milk of all its members. It sells the milk at various prices according to the purpose for which the milk is used. Thus for March milk located 201 miles from New York City and containing 3 per cent butterfat was sold by the Dairymen's League at the following prices:

	<u>March 1924</u>	<u>March 1923</u>
To be sold as fluid milk.....	\$2.33 per 100 lbs.	\$2.80
Used for cream.....	2.10	2.50
(An additional \$.10 is charged if the skim milk is utilized)		
Used for condensed milk.....	2.00	
Used for butter and cheese.....	Price depends on market price of products.	

Part of the milk is handled in plants belonging to the league. The receipts for all milk sold are pooled and the producers receive a uniform price except for differentials for butterfat, distance from New York, etc.

The formation of the League in its present form was due largely to the belief of dairymen that control of the fluid milk supply would enable them to secure a larger price. However, the attempt of the League to maintain a price for fluid milk materially above the price of milk for other purposes has resulted in severe competition for the fluid milk market. It has also caused competitors to hunt up new sources of supply. At the same time the building of concrete roads and the increased use of motor trucks have greatly extended the area from which milk can be drawn for shipment to New York City. The natural result therefore has been a material increase in the amount of milk seeking the higher price paid for fluid milk. Since November the League and its competitors have been cutting prices to hold the trade, and prices have tumbled.

Members of the League pool received no more for milk produced in January than they did for that produced in June and July of last year (\$1.92 per 100 lbs. base price compared with \$1.915 during last June and July). The January pool price for average milk was about 116 per cent of the average January price during the years 1910-1914. In the last six months the price of milk has dropped from a point considerably above the price of feed to a point considerably below. The situation is one of discouragement and anxiety to dairymen. Herds are being reduced to some extent and the amount of grain being fed has already been sharply reduced.

Meanwhile, the sale of milk on a butter basis in this State means hard times for the producers here compared with dairy farmers further west. The freight rate from Minnesota on the amount of mixed grain fed to a New York cow in a year is probably close to \$9.00. The freight on the amount of butter which a cow produces is only about \$3.00. Hay is also cheaper in Minnesota.

While the outlook, therefore, is for lower prices than last year, I do not expect milk prices to continue to be on the exceedingly low level prevailing today. I do expect, however, that prices will be low enough to cause a slight decrease in in the amount of grain being fed.

This in turn will cause a decrease in production per cow. Dairying, of course, is a line of farming that changes very slowly and I am not predicting changes that would appear very large on a percentage basis. For example, my offhand guess would be that the number of cows will be further decreased about 3 to 5 per cent during the year and the production of milk per cow may be expected to be perhaps 4 per cent lower than in 1923. Fewer calves will be raised but probably more butter will be made on the farms.

Since the present acute situation is probably more or less temporary, the best policy for dairymen would seem to be to raise at least the normal number of calves but to dispose of some of their older cows and produce as much of their milk on pasture as conditions permit.

GEORGIA

Our labor situation is serious. The decrease in the number of farm workers is reported as follows:

Decrease in number of hands in immediate family.....	3%
Decrease in number of regular farm workers.....	10%
Extra hands needed.....	5%

Approximately one-fifth of the farm labor has left the section or gone into public works during the 12 months ending February 15th. The farmers report that a few of the Negroes are returning, but that many more farm hands will leave as soon as the cold weather is over.

The number of acres of idle land is probably a good indication of the labor situation. There probably will be about 8 or 10 per cent fewer acres under cultivation this year than last year. The proportion of land that will be idle this year in the State is somewhere between 17 and 25 per cent, depending on the season.

The labor index March 1st showed the supply 69 per cent of normal and the demand 84 per cent of normal; or supply in terms of demand 83 per cent of the demand. The labor situation in certain localities is being eased by the occasional shutting down of cotton mills. The unemployment in Atlanta seems to be increasing.

FERTILIZER. Correspondents say that they are going to use about 96 per cent as much fertilizer this year as last year. The upper portion of the State will use more fertilizer. The area devastated by the boll weevil will use very much less. The sales of fertilizer to March 8th, inclusive, were 386,467 tons, against 485,105 tons to the same date last year. The sales during the last eight days have been very heavy, 85,800 tons against 53,000 for the same eight days last year. A great many farmers in South Georgia are not able to buy fertilizer. In many areas no credit is being extended.

PROGRESS OF FARM WORK. Farm work is considerably behind usual. Our March Weekly has not yet been tabulated. Replies, however, seem to indicate that we are considerably behind the average season. The index will be somewhere between 69 and 70. (100 reports.)

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES. Peach, apple, and pecan growers are in good shape. A freeze occurred on the night of March 10th, which may have damaged the peach crop somewhat. We now have out a special peach schedule and special March weekly, which will give us information on this point as soon as it is possible to determine what the damage is. Continued freezing weather is expected, but it is not generally thought that the damage will be severe. We will wire last-minute remarks prior to the 14th.

Producers of Irish and sweet potatoes are also in good shape. The amount of sweet potatoes in warehouses is about 22 per cent of last year. The sweet potato crop brought unusually good prices.

Early vegetables were killed by the freeze. Winter gardens were practically destroyed. This is quite a serious matter to the average farmer, as the staple article of diet is salt pork and greens.

PEANUTS. The peanut crop last season was very short. However, prices were very satisfactory. Consequently, there will be heavy increases in peanuts this year, particularly in the new territory of middle Georgia.

TOBACCO. Georgia tobacco growers made splendid crops last year and secured fine prices. This occurred in areas where cotton was a failure. Consequently, the tobacco area will be very greatly increased this season. Most of the growers had only a few acres of tobacco, and the balance of their farms in cotton. The tobacco enabled them to pay their debts and left them in fair financial shape.

There is practically no tobacco on hand in this State. Ninety-nine per cent of the "bright" tobacco is marketed prior to September 15th. Wrapper tobacco requires a year or more to cure by the process used.

COTTON. More than two-thirds of the State is in extremely bad shape. Last fall correspondents reported between 10 and 12 per cent of the farmers were quitting for good. While this was probably exaggerated, it is a good index of the situation.

The increase in idle land which is reported for the present season is also a good indication of our situation. Probably a better idea can be obtained by remembering that we have fallen from a harvested cotton acreage of 5,400,000 to a harvested acreage of 3,400,000 in the past six or seven years.

The amount of cotton grown per plow will be decreased in most of the State. We can not afford to produce cotton, unless we can obtain a better yield than the last year's State average and unless the price is better than at present.

The most important thing, from a cotton standpoint, is whether the severe cold has destroyed a sufficient number of the weevils to hold them in check. The temperature fell as low as zero in about one-half of the State earlier in the winter, and this usually acts as an effective control. We rather expect the weevil damage to be much less than usual this season, and, therefore, look for a considerably larger cotton crop in Georgia, irrespective of any moderate acreage changes.

A very much greater amount of calcium arsenate is going to be used the coming season. Correspondents indicate it to be 60 per cent more. This is one of the very essential fetures of the cotton situation.

GENERAL SUMMARY. The disaster which overtook the cotton crop last season, together with the migration of farm labor, has resulted in a very great change in the agriculture of the State. Between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 acres of land have gone out of cultivation, and more will be idle this season than ever before. At the same time, the competent farmers who have learned how to adapt themselves to circumstances, have done fairly well on account of the good prices of our major crops - cotton, peanuts, peaches and tobacco.

The whole State is in a condition of change, and all sorts of new crops are being tried out, in the hope of finding some satisfactory source of revenue. The increase in the poultry industry is almost unprecedented, and a cash income from milk cows is becoming a major item in many sections.

The areas which have been growing special crops, such as apples, peaches, sugar cane, pimento peppers, tobacco, Irish and sweet potatoes, have not been so badly affected. In many instances, labor from the cotton sections has sought these areas, and they are, therefore, in good shape in every way.

A large portion of the State has been dependent on the sale of wool and timber, and an astonishing amount of lumber has been cut. The volume of the money received has been great enough, in many instances, to offset the decrease in the crops produced. However, the timber supply is very nearly gone. Another year will see the exhaustion of most of this farm timber.

INDIANA

Grain farmers are in a more unfavorable situation than any other class. None of their crops were exceptionally good last year. The yields were about average or a little better, but the quality was con-

siderably below average. This is true especially of corn because of a heavy freeze about the middle of September in the best corn counties where summer rains had kept the crop green and growing beyond the average date of maturity. Nearly every field in the central third of the State was very badly damaged to say the least. Wheat, rye, oats and barley were damaged materially by continuous rains at thrashing time. The growing crops of wheat and rye have been severely damaged by freezing and thawing weather.

Some fruit growers say trees were damaged by the severe weather in January, while others maintain it is too early to tell. Last year's fruit crops were good and nearly every fruit grower in the State made some money. This class is probably in better shape financially than any other. Onion growers have formed a pool and feel that they are in good position not only to keep up the price of last year, but to increase the acreage slightly. Tomato producers are experiencing a little difficulty in some sections in arriving at a satisfactory agreement with the canners. There are also several cooperative associations of tomato producers in process or organizations from which it is hoped better results will obtain. Truck gardeners are fairly well organized near industrial centers and are in a favorable situation.

Hog and cattle production is usually carried on together in the State. Neither made any money last year and the start off this year does not look favorable. The ratio of livestock prices compared with corn (which requires from one-fourth to one-third more than last year to secure the same amount of gain) is somewhat out of joint and farmers have considerably reduced their breeding stock. Many farmers have marketed their livestock in an unfinished condition.

Tobacco producers generally belong to the pool and the price secured for the last crop was very satisfactory. Not many of last year's producers will increase their acreage, but many who have not grown tobacco heretofore will have it in small patches this year. Melon producers will have about the same acreage as last year. These farmers were generally satisfied with results obtained last year. Mint growers are taking steps to form a pool for this year's crop in the hope that prices will be increased although the returns from last year's crops were not unprofitable.

SUMMING UP: No group of farmers in Indiana is in destitute circumstances, although some did not make a profit last year. The farm labor situation is getting easier. Both because of the return to villages and towns of those who went to industrial centers and more idle farms and fields than last year. With smaller acreages and more intensive farming and cooperation in labor the same results will be obtained at a considerable reduction in cost. All classes are hopeful that the current year will bring the exchange value of agricultural products somewhere near the level of commodities farmers are required to buy.

IOWA

For the past three years the price level of farm products in Iowa has been decidedly lower than the prices of non-agricultural goods (Iowa price level was 108 in December, 108 in January and 109 in February with the United States wholesale price index of non-agricultural goods about 155). Debts were contracted and loans made by banks at a higher price level than at present. Many notes and mortgages made during 1919 and 1920 are now coming due. Farm mortgages are being foreclosed and from all sections of the State we have reports of farmers being forced out of business and moving to town. We are even receiving a few scattered reports of abandoned land in Iowa. The assessors are apparently finding a smaller number of farms. The farm implement men report an increased demand for tractors. All of this points to an increased acreage per man.

The financial situation in Iowa is anything but satisfactory at the present time. There are many small banks struggling to keep going. Huge surpluses have been written off because of bad loans. Too large a proportion of the loans are non-liquid or "frozen" being based on real estate. That part of the State bordering on South Dakota seems to be hit hardest.

To what extent the present credit situation will affect agricultural production in 1924 is difficult to determine. The larger companies selling farm machinery supply a large part of the necessary credit to the farmer for the purchase of new machinery. One large company states that their collections are 3 per cent better than a year ago. A good deal of the cattle feeding is financed by outside banking interests; the Commission Firms and Loan Companies are usually willing to loan money for cattle feeding at a lower rate of interest than the local bank. Loans of this kind are highly desirable because of their self-liquidating character. The experienced feeder will have little difficulty in obtaining credit. Credit is not usually necessary for the purchase of seed in this State. Some local banks are encouraging dairy production by supplying credit for the purchase of dairy cows. This is a practice that may react in somewhat the same way as did the loans for buying brood sows a couple of years ago.

The past three years of low prices and high taxes are forcing the average farmer to adopt a program of economy, hard work and self sufficiency little thought of a few years ago. He will hire as little labor, buy as little new machinery as possible and produce all that he can. As an individual under present conditions he has his choice between this program or bankruptcy. Is it any wonder that we have a greater production than we need? Marginal land and the marginal or less efficient farmer are being forced out of the race. We can look for this process to be much less rapid in Iowa than in any other State; partly because the fertile, level land of the State is as good as any in the country and partly because the competition of industry for labor is less keen than in States farther East.

LABOR. It is the judgment of the State Labor Bureau that one-third less farm help will be hired this year in Iowa than during last year. There are about four registrations of farm laborers to one farm job reported to the State Bureau. The cold weather so far in March has retarded the demand for labor as well as the supply. Open and mild weather last fall continuing until the last of December enabled the farmers to finish up their fall work and do a good deal of work, that is normally done in the spring. More than the usual amount of all plowing was done last fall. The general attitude of the farmer is to hire as little labor as possible.

FARM MACHINERY. Farm machinery factories of Iowa are either shut down or running very light. Dealers are hopeful and think that eventually the farm machinery will be worn out and they will have a chance to sell some new equipment to the farmer. There is no positive evidence this early in the season of any marked increase in demand for farm machinery. The demand for tractors seems to be slightly better than a year ago.

PROGRESS OF FARM WORK. As mentioned under labor, the fall and December weather was ideal for farm work of all kinds. Very little spring work started. Some stalk fields have been leveled but that is about all as the ground is still frozen.

GRAIN. There is a scarcity of good seed corn. Crib corn tests less than 60 per cent storage germination. There is enough corn in practically every community if it can be located. Seed corn testing is absolutely essential this spring. Old corn will be used where available. From the remarks on the 1,600 schedules on "Intentions to Plant" coming into this office, the general opinion seems to prevail that corn acreage will be increased and that oat acreage will remain about the same. An increase in grass seeding is indicated especially in the dairy section. There is a desire to get away from oats but no satisfactory substitute is at hand. Legumes, including alfalfa and soy beans, are mentioned from all parts of the State.

A Montana County assessor reports only 10 per cent as much wheat as a year ago. Rains last fall in that section hindered seeding greatly. Southern Iowa counties report chinch bugs and Hessian Fly as the chief causes of acreage reduction, combined of course with the low prices.

Seed oats are reported as being high in price and scarce in south central Iowa. This is not a heavy oat section however.

The need for corn as feed is one of the reasons advanced in the feeding sections for an increased corn acreage. The needs for money to pay debts is probably the most commonly advanced reason.

CATTLE. Cattle feeders and shippers are reporting a normal seasonal marketing, during the next three months. During the last four years the greatest volume of cattle shipments for the spring months has taken place in May, with the exception that in June, 1921, approximately 10 per cent more cattle were marketed than in May.

Stocker and feeder receipts in the fall of 1923 included many yearling steers and calves. These did not go on full feeding in the fall; in fact, it has been the plan to run many of these on pasture and full feed them for late summer and fall markets. Such feeding policy has a limiting effect upon the spring marketings. Livestock men report about 10 per cent fewer cattle on feed on March 1, 1924 than a year previous. This would provide a fair basis of estimating between 175,000 and 180,000 head of cattle to be marketed out of Iowa in May.

Other factors may reduce these figures. The actual feeding value of corn is conservatively estimated at 15 per cent to 50 per cent lower than normally, which will effect a later marketing of steers. The recent gain in price of heavy cattle, also will tend to bring about a later marketing.

Credit conditions in a few feeding sections are not particularly favorable towards encouraging any greater amount of feeding. A rather serious financial situation seems about to settle upon banks and general commerce as well as upon the cattle feeder in an area of 15 to 20 counties of western and northern Iowa, practically covering one of Iowa's heaviest cattle feeding sections. It is unsafe to attempt a forecast covering the fed-steer marketings out of this western area.

HOGS. Stockyard reports indicate that Iowa marketed approximately 13 per cent more hogs in December of 1923 than for the same month of 1922, also, shipments from Iowa to Chicago, Kansas City, Sioux City, East St. Louis and St. Joseph during January, 1924 have been approximately 12 per cent heavier than during December 1923 the month previous to the same markets.

The seasonal trend of marketings will continue strong in comparison with former years even though Iowa farms had 5 per cent fewer hogs on January 1, 1924 than a year ago. A considerable number of brood sows were marketed during the late summer of 1923, but the 1923 crop of pigs was so much larger than the 1922 crop that heavy marketings during May and June must necessarily continue.

Reports from a few scattered farms in eastern Iowa on the early pig crop indicate a substantial reduction from last spring with an attending 20 to 25 per cent loss per litter.

When the Iowa corn growers move to fix the price of corn at one dollar per bushel or more, they are likely to lose some of their best customers, the stock feeders. The hog men report a movement towards a slightly decreased production this year.

NORTH DAKOTA

LABOR. North Dakota's labor needs for spring will not develop until the character of the spring season becomes apparent, that is to say, whether it will be an early or late spring. Normally spring work should be in general progress by the second week in April.

Probably less than a third of the spring labor supply is furnished from migratory movement compared with about two-thirds for harvest needs. The migratory movement begins early in March. Present indications point to some surplus of this type of labor this spring, both in point of numbers and the fact that its need will be lessened by (1) a somewhat larger floating population that remained in towns and cities during the winter months and (2) the policy adopted by farmers in recent years of holding requirements to a minimum by interchange of help with neighbors.

While there may be some local shortages of labor developing later, the present outlook is for an ample supply for spring needs at a reasonable wage. Help hired by the month shows a slightly better demand this spring in sections where farmers are on a more diversified program, but these needs are being met on a somewhat lower scale of wages than prevailed last spring. The scale for day wages had yet to be set but the present range with board is running between \$2.00 and \$2.50 compared with a range of \$2.50 to \$3.00 a year ago.

GRAIN. The proportion of grain growers to the total farms in the State is high. In the 1919 federal census 89 per cent of all farms reported spring wheat acreage; 66 per cent oats acreage; 45 per cent rye acreage and 42 per cent barley acreage.

The grain producer in 1923 experienced not only poor yields but poor prices as well. The 1923 wheat crop (58,660,000 bushels) was less than half of the 1922 production and the December 1 farm price per bushel four cents less. As indicating the relative size of surpluses both years our March 1 inquiry shows about 40 million bushels of the 1923 crop as having been available for shipment out of the county where grown compared with 101 million bushels of the 1922 crop. A similar situation exists with rye, another cash crop. The 1923 production of rye was about 10.0 million bushels compared with 28.9 million bushels in 1922 and the December 1 farm price 48 cents per bushel compared with 60 in 1922. Oats and barley outturns in 1923 were both below those of 1922 and December 1 farm prices also below those for the 1922 crops.

March 1 farm reserves of wheat (about 10 million bushels) will little more than meet seed requirements for the 1924 crop, and from all information at hand farmers generally appear to have their seed.

The discouragement to wheat growers is reflected in the survey of intentions to plant which indicates a strong decrease in wheat acreage and increased oats, barley, corn and flax acreages. The carrying out of present intentions will depend to a large extent upon the character of the spring seeding season. An early spring will modify present intentions with respect to the decrease shown for wheat and a late spring will strengthen intentions with respect to increasing late crop acreages.

In considering the situation of the small grain farmer it must be remembered that he is tied up with a large sized farm (average acreage for State 466.1 acres per farm) and that his shifts from wheat must go largely into the complementary crops of oats and barley if he is to maintain his production unit and keep within his labor and power resources.

The financial situation of the grain producer is stringent. Old debts and back interest are pressing and new credit is difficult to obtain. Unpaid taxes are a further difficulty. On the other hand there is a general realization of a need of economy and of limiting expenditures to necessities.

The outlook for the grain grower may be said to be uncertain with much of his program still to be determined.

NEBRASKA

BEEF CATTLE. Nebraska feeding regions received 15 per cent more cars of cattle during the period, August to December inclusive than for the similar period the previous year. There were 8 per cent more cattle on feed, January 1, than a year ago. Omaha market receipts for January and February from Nebraska increased 11 per cent over the previous year, indicating that the present number on feed to be the same or slightly less than a year ago. While the poor feeding quality of both hay and corn has increased the cost of finishing cattle, and is also partly responsible for the large run of poorly finished cattle, the returns to feeders have ranged from unsatisfactory on poor grade stuff to highly satisfactory returns on well finished stuff. In fact, there has been a shortage of good grade stuff.

In general, farmers have been fairly well satisfied with prices received and most of the complaint has been on the prices they have to pay for commodities. Since the bulk of the cattle now on feed are in the hands of regular feeders, a more orderly marketing is expected, and a better grade of stuff. The trade expects higher prices although some anxiety is expressed as to the probable effect that the large stocks of pork may have on the price of beef. On the other hand, a shortage of grass fat cattle is expected during the summer, and the feeling is that late marketing of grain fed stuff will bring good prices.

Special mention was made as to the generally unsatisfactory results from feeding the poor grade of both hay and corn. They resulted in increased cost of feeding, and a large run of inferior stuff. With the uncertain future, and large runs of both cattle and hogs, low feeding quality of hay and corn, there has been a tendency to early marketing, the feeder preferring to take a small profit than to take chances on a future market. The trade expects better finished stuff in the future, and higher price, as the remaining supply of short fed stuff in the hands of small feeders is being marketed, and a tendency toward later marketing on part of the regular experienced feeders who will soon hold the bulk of the stuff on feed. However, these calculations may be upset if the price of corn, which is lacking in feeding quality, takes an abnormal advance, without some proportionate advance in the price of cattle.

FEED. Last year's corn crop was exceptionally large. Unfortunately the feeding quality has been low. While the quality of corn has improved, especially through a lowered moisture content, it is still lacking in feeding quality and this has had the tendency to increase the marketing of poorly finished stuff. The local supply of corn has been sufficient except in concentrated feeding regions. Here the prices have advanced, and in some cases exceeded the terminal market price. Movement of corn from regions that do little feeding has been heavy.

As in the case of corn, the hay crop was very large and of poor feeding quality. Numerous and continued rains delayed the cutting of alfalfa and impaired the quality. The quality was further injured by rains after being cut. Since the marketing costs of hay are high, farmers could not afford to market the poor grade of hay, and the most economical way to market it seemed to be through livestock. This accounts in part for the 15 per cent increase over the large receipts a year ago in feeding regions. The low quality of hay has also contributed to the volume of poorly finished cattle to a certain extent. The hay supply has been ample except in the concentrated feeding regions. Here, some of the farmers have preferred to ship in a good grade of wild hay to the poor grade of alfalfa.

KANSAS

GRAIN. About 275 of the 2,000 correspondents reporting on the spring acreage survey commented that wheat acreage had been cut. Half of this 275 reporters live in the eastern third of the State. The majority of those commenting said wheat had been cut because it did not pay. About a third of them said it was because the soil was too wet last fall for proper preparation. A few said wheat acreage was reduced because of fly or chinch bugs. There is a decided tendency in the eastern half of the State to diversify, raise more legumes, hay

and forage, and to get into cows and chickens on a larger scale. The wheat farmer concedes that he is gambling on his hopes for better prices. As a rule he is not insistent on higher prices for his grain but he insists that he ought to buy what he needs at a more equitable price. He thinks something ought to be done to lower the price of what he buys instead of promising him a panacea that will give him a better price for his grain. He is coming to feel that his present disparity is due to the fact that labor and manufacturing have been petted too much with special privileges and protective tariffs. In the meantime the grain farmer who has been depending mostly on wheat is getting into corn, oats, barley, kafirs, etc., wherever each is more suitable and is planting more hay and legumes.

BEEF CATTLE. Been a losing game for the last year. Not very keen on buying Texas stuff for the Flint Hills pastures but many Texas producers are leasing for their own stuff because of a threatened shortage of grass in the southwest. Looks now like these blue-stem pastures would not be as full as last year. There is, however, a fairly large carry-over of stuff from last summer and fall purchases at yards. The shortgrass region of the West is already reporting that an unusually good calf crop is arriving. Without doubt the holdings of cow stuff is the largest we have had for years. Very few are really feeding out on grain. Say it does not pay at present prices. Foraging through their holdings till grass time. Only warmed-up and rough-fed stuff going to market.

TEXAS

GRAIN. With the exception of those producing oats, who had good yields last year, the grain growers are in a relatively poorer position than the producers of any farm crop. Indications point to an increased corn, oats and barley acreage but to decreases in wheat, rye, and rice with probably the same acreage of grain sorghums. Much of the wheat land is going into cotton. Corn yields have been low for two successive seasons and wheat during three. Last year was the first good oat year since 1919.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES. Producers of citrus fruits, figs, strawberries and truck have had good seasons and are in favorable position. Growers of apples, pears, peaches and plums, however, have had a number of bad years and will not have much of a crop this year, due to the freezing weather of the 10th and 11th. Some of the producers of spinach are making good profits this year. Last season was favorable for melon growers and the truck farmers.

HOGS. A great many producers are going out of the hog-raising business due to dissatisfaction with prices received and the high price and scarcity of corn. It is expected that there will be little interest

shown in this industry so long as the price of cotton remains good, as corn land will be put into cotton. The packers find difficulty in securing a sufficient number of hogs within the State and are shipping in from outside. It is felt that there are fewer hogs in the State than in many years.

BEEF CATTLE. The financial condition of the cattle men is improving slowly, but four poor years have put them so far behind that recovery will take time. Little restocking is being done so far, but when the spring movement is over it is expected that more or less of this will be done. The sheep and goat men are in a much better position financially and have excellent prospects for the year. Many large ranches are being cut up into farms. A great many cattle men have become bankrupt while others are being carried by their creditors. Those operating only on borrowed capital have almost entirely disappeared. In many instances, if liquidation were forced, the value of the cattle would not pay the encumbrance.

SPECIAL CROPS. Hay producers have had fair yields and good prices. In the irrigated sections of the west, many acres of alfalfa are being plowed up for cotton. Broomcorn growers did only fairly well and many are discouraged. If the cotton crop is a success this year, the farmers will become prosperous. They are in a much better position than since the ruinous decline in the cotton market some years ago. It is believed that the weevil menace is not so great this year and if a serious outbreak should occur the increased supplies of arsenate will enable the planters to combat the pest more effectively.

NEM MEXICO

LIVESTOCK. The cattle situation is not at all favorable. A prolonged drouth has seriously depleted the ranges and forced the movement of many cattle. Nearly all cattle men are heavily in debt, and have had very little sale for their stuff, and what was sold was at very low prices. Forced liquidation continues and many old-time cattle men have been forced out. However, grass and water are now abundant on practically all the ranges, the winter losses have been far below normal, green feed has started, and prospects are excellent for a good calf crop this spring. During the past week prices have shown a decided change for the better, and the demand is on the increase.

The sheep situation is much better. These animals were enabled to feed on shorter grass than cattle and withstood the drouth with much lighter losses. Lambs and wool have brought good prices. The sheep are now in splendid condition, prospects are excellent for a big lamb crop next month, and wool is being contracted at profitable prices.

UTAH

WATER. The weather the past winter has been mild and precipitation light. Even the periods when the mean temperature was below normal brought no extremely low temperatures, so livestock suffered little and losses have been very light. Agricultural activities have been favored so far but the stores of snow in the mountains are deficient and summer water prospects alarming. The water content of the snow on the mountain watersheds is the lowest for the nine years the local weather bureau office has comparable snow records. Occasional comments are heard that water prospects are the poorest in 20 years. February was the driest for 33 years. Conditions are especially unpromising in the Colorado River drainage basin where water equivalent of snow is only 35 per cent of the nine-year average. In the Sevier River drainage area, the snow has a water equivalent of 37 per cent of average and in the Great Basin it amounts to 47 per cent. Range will be less affected by snow deficiency than crops, but drouth is serious now in the southwestern counties of the State and the trouble seems to be spreading to the other southern counties of the State.

The prospect of insufficient water causes hesitancy in planting such crops as beets and potatoes which involve much labor and need water abundantly late in the season. It may also check the increase in alfalfa acreage. Possibly even wheat with a comparatively low price may be increased in acreage, since it matures earlier and has much better chances of making a fair yield with scanty irrigation. Farmers are still hopeful that storms may come and make modification of there planting plans unnecessary. The weather-wise are the least hopeful.

BEEF CATTLE. Beef cattle producers are more hopeful than for several years. Market prices of cattle are improving, and feeders made money on their later sales. Rather few growers have received the higher prices, but they are much heartened by them. The calf crop is uncertain, though the season has been very favorable. Last season was also good, but the calf crop proved rather light. Less attention than needed has been given to bulls the past several years. Cows have been hard to sell, which has resulted in selling the better ones and keeping the poorer with resultant deterioration of herds.

With numbers slightly less than last year and prices tending upward, the most discouraging feature of the situation is the sub-normal precipitation. This is most serious in sections usually making spring sales, so may not be disastrous.

Sales in San Juan County of yearling steers at \$29 per head, twos at \$38, and threes at \$45, are \$3 to \$7 higher than same sales brought last year for the June delivery.

SPECIAL CROPS. Sugar beets have made good yields and brought good prices for two years. This has been of great help in offsetting the poor returns from wheat and cattle. The beet acreage would be increased were not a water shortage probable, and may take place any way. It is more likely, however, that beets will hardly maintain the present acreage, as good yields are not to be expected when late water is scarce and the costs of growing make a good yield necessary.

Alfalfa seed has been a good yielding crop and prices have been good. The acreage harvested is dependent on conditions in midsummer and can not be even guessed now. It may be safely assumed all the acreage will be cut that is likely to set seed.

CALIFORNIA

PROGRESS OF FARM WORK. Farm work, on the whole, for the entire State is well advanced. In some areas, particularly where large acreages of grain are produced on a rainfall basis, operations have been greatly retarded by the drouth during late autumn and winter. In these areas there are still some lands which have not been plowed but since the season is now so far advanced it is probable that further seeding will not be done, even should ample rainfall occur during the next few weeks. Unplowed lands without available irrigation water will likely not be cropped but may be plowed and fallowed. Pruning and spraying of orchards are well advanced in most localities; nearly all pruning being complete at this date and spraying well up with the seasonal demands. The plowing of orchards and vineyards is, on the average, progressing a little ahead of the normal date on account of the very light rainfall and the demand for early irrigation.

WEATHER. The winter drouth in California is most severe throughout the southern counties, a little more rainfall having been received northward through the State. In the northern coastal and mountain counties the seasonal rainfall at this date is approximately 12 per cent below normal; throughout the Sacramento Valley from 30 to 45 per cent below normal; in San Joaquin Valley from 65 to 70 per cent below normal and in southern California from 70 to 75 per cent below normal.

The extensive variations in conditions in the different agricultural valleys throughout California make it rather difficult to forecast what the full detrimental effects of this drouth may mean. A shortage of rainfall demands additional irrigation and along with this excess demand we are met with the situation of an exceedingly light snowfall in the high mountains. The latter situation can scarcely be improved during the spring months for it is a recognized fact that late snows do not pack and as a result melt off with the earliest thawing temperatures in the mountains.

Power companies are installing some new steam plants and forming interlocking connections of main companies, but a shortage of electrical

energy is almost certain to occur during August and September. Already many towns are curtailing the use of electricity for such purposes as electric advertising in order that the farmers' pumps may be kept in operation as continuously as possible throughout the year. This situation is no doubt over-emphasized in some localities, but at the best it is serious.

GRAIN. Wheat and barley production will probably be more directly affected by the fall and winter drouth than any other 1924 crops. Early fall plantings in some localities were made when there was only sufficient moisture in the soil to promote germination and not to sustain the plant until more moisture was received. However, throughout the northern half of the State there was little loss from this cause. Later rains have placed the grain in this area in a condition that indicates a good harvest, should normal conditions prevail during the remainder of the season. Aside from further precipitation which is required, much depends on the freedom from excessive spring north winds which frequently occur in the Sacramento Valley.

In the southern half of the State considerable reseeding was necessary. These plantings were germinated by two light winter rains, but there is not ample moisture in the ground to insure a crop without a period of normal rainfall following until harvest time. Barley is probably in better condition throughout this area than wheat, due to the fact that river bottom lands are ordinarily seeded to barley while wheat is planted on the rolling uplands which are not so retentive of moisture. There is still a prospect that California may harvest 75 to 80 per cent of a normal wheat and barley crop, depending entirely, however, on rainfall and weather conditions during the next 8 or 10 weeks. It is quite certain that there will be a larger acreage of grain lands fallowed during the summer of 1924 than during recent years.

FRUIT. The only indication at this date that the production of fruit in California would not be normal is the threatened water shortage which may be a determining factor in some areas; also the scarcity of precipitation in other areas where fruit culture is dependent entirely on rainfall for moisture supply. It is still too early to forecast the outlook for the coming year in a more detailed way; however, indications are that the deciduous fruit production will be less than last year. Flowering is well advanced for some of the deciduous fruit varieties, and should a spring frost occur soon, there would be a possibility of great damage to almonds, plums, apricots and peaches. All orchards and vineyard work is well advanced. Some damage was sustained by the Valencia orange crop due to the freeze of late December and early January; however, citrus **TREES** were not severely damaged in any locality.

VEGETABLES. Vegetable production for late spring and early summer harvest has suffered to some extent due to the shortage of winter rains. Just how seriously these crops have been affected it is difficult to determine. Unusually cold weather experienced in Imperial Valley during January

has done much to reduce the average yield per acre as well as the quality of the winter lettuce being produced there. There is no report at this time that the cantaloupe and casabe acreage in California will be reduced in 1924 below that of 1923. There will no doubt be less interplanting of vegetables between rows of young orchards and vineyards than was practiced last year, due to the effort to supply available irrigation water mainly to crops already established, should serious shortages occur.

Planting of early potatoes in California is less than during recent years due almost entirely to the winter drouth. A large proportion of the early potato acreage in California occurs in the southern counties where the lack of rainfall has prevented proper plowing and cultivation in preparation for planting. In San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles County, where irrigation water is supplied by the same aqueduct system that supplies the city of Los Angeles, there are in force very stringent rules preventing the use of water for annual crops due to the fear that a water shortage may occur.

BEEF CATTLE. The situation being experienced by beef cattle producers in California is at the present quite discouraging. The shortage of winter ranges has brought about a decline in the condition of beef cattle in the southern half of the state. In these same areas there has developed a scarcity of hay which has forced all livestock men to pay high prices for hay which is available for purchase. Should spring rains bring on good summer pasture and abundant hay, this situation will be relieved very materially.

This adverse condition of shortage of range feed has forced some cattle men to lot feeding, in which case cottonseed cake has been used quite extensively. There are some indications that this practice has been quite satisfactory and that some growers who have finished cattle by concentrated feeding may continue the practice during other years. Prices have been much better for finished beef in recent weeks than during the previous year, although the supply of native finished cattle is very short.

The outbreak of foot and mouth disease which was detected in California February 22nd has complicated the pasture situation, as quarantine regulations prevent the movement of livestock from one pasture to another in the quarantined area or the movement of livestock to ranges in adjacent States. It appears at present that this disease is under good control and it is quite probable that the quarantine will be raised within the next few weeks in counties where no infection has been found. Obviously this will relieve the situation to some extent.

It has been obvious for some time that the movement of California spring lambs to eastern markets would be much curtailed and begin later than usual. If the rigid quarantine against the movement of California livestock into other States, occasioned by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, is discontinued within a few weeks, it still may be possible to market in eastern cities 60 to 70 per cent as many spring lambs as in 1923.

BEANS. The principal bean producing areas of the State fall within that territory where precipitation is much below the normal. In order to insure a fair prospect for a bean crop there must be abundant soil moisture present when the beans are planted. It is, however, several weeks from planting time in the earliest planting sections, which still leaves ample time for improvement of moisture conditions, should abundant rainfall occur in those areas in the near future.

COTTON. The very good price and yields that existed in California in 1923 will undoubtedly stimulate the production of cotton for the coming year. The greater portion of land regularly farmed to cotton in California is in the counties of Imperial and Riverside where irrigation is supplied very largely from the Colorado River. As available irrigation water is one of the prerequisites of cotton culture in California throughout the summer, a water shortage would very much cripple the production of this crop. There is no indication that such a water shortage will occur on the Colorado River and it is not probable that any attempt will be made to produce cotton under pump irrigation where water lifts are deep and where power is not reasonably secure.

RICE. Early reports indicate that there will be an increased acreage of rice planted compared with 1923, but here again there is a possibility that actual plantings will show very little, if any, increase should the time remaining between now and planting season continue with less than normal rain or snowfall. Most of the rice produced in California is dependent entirely on water from the Sacramento River. This river is at present at a lower stage than has been recorded at this date for many years.

LATE POTATOES. Present indications are that the late potato acreage of 1924 will at least equal that of 1923. The areas where the largest commercial acreages of potatoes are produced have been under the operation of Oriental tenants. There are many replacements of these tenants at the present time which may effect the acreage of potatoes which will be planted. Throughout these areas it seems to be the common belief that either the Japanese or the Chinamen are more temperamentally adapted to potato production than any other tenants.

HOPS. This is a comparatively minor crop in California but during some seasons represents quite an important financial income. The very low price paid for hops in 1922 caused a large acreage to be left uncultivated during 1923. The present good prices being paid seem to indicate that a much larger acreage will be worked for the coming year than was worked last year.

There seems to be little doubt in the minds of people who have been concerned with agricultural enterprises of California but that the past year was one of the most severe that this State has experienced since the war. This has been very largely brought about by the relatively low prices received for fruit crops during the year when production, on the whole, was at its height. The general feeling prevailing among such people at this time is that production for 1924 will progress along more conservative lines with the hope that crops may be produced at a little less cost.

